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# THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

APRIL 1st, 1854.

## Music in this Number.

THE LORD IS KING (EASTER ANTHEM),  
Composed by J. PITTMAN.

## MENDELSSOHN'S "ST. PAUL."

Contributed by G. A. MACFARREN.

(Continued from page 251, Vol. V.)

*No. 12.*—The important personage of the work is now introduced actively upon the scene, being presented as the agent of all the vindictive enmity against the Church which we have seen to prevail among the Hebrews. Zealous to enthusiasm, Saul oppresses the Disciples with the utmost violence; he believes in the truth of his cause, and he acts in the fervor of his faith; but the Hebraic principle of vengeance is all he knows and all he feels of the Divine dispensation and the Christian doctrine of "peace on earth to men of good will," has never reached his sympathy—has never softened the iron rigor of his heart; and he accordingly enforces his cause by threatenings and slaughter, as the misguided servant of the "jealous God," whose godliest attribute of loving mercy is unknown to him. A short Recitative for tenor describes this relationship of the future Apostle with the first believers. I have before spoken of the frequent introduction of these narrative Recitatives, as a chief reason of the lesser popularity of this than of Mendelssohn's later Oratorio, since, by interrupting its dramatic character, they divide and so weaken our interest; their introduction is essential to the development of the history by the exclusive employment of scriptural texts; and, in the treatment of this example, to have dismissed it with indifferent unimportance was to make the least obtrusive its unfortunate necessity.

The character of Saul is throughout the work represented by the bass, and it has been a particular test of the composer's art to preserve this character always individual, always identical, in all the variety of situations in which it is displayed, even through the great modification to which it is subjected by the conversion. The grand energetic air in which he denounces the fury of the Lord against His offending people, is a noble entry for the chief character, exciting and retaining our interest by the new and peculiar coloring (no less of technical effect than of poetical expression) it introduces into the music, and thus, by distinguishing this character from all that surrounds it in the picture, stamping the hero of the work with prominent dignity and importance. The figure of rapidly-moving quavers that forms

a chief feature in the accompaniment of this song, representing a fiery, restless impetuosity, is essentially characteristic of Mendelssohn, and is to be identified with the thought that pervades many of his instrumental compositions, modified continually to agree with the various situations of its introduction, but always still the same; the copious employment of diatonic discord, embodying here the idea of power, is another speciality that, if not peculiar to the composer, is so much more frequent with him than with most modern musicians, as to suggest some recollection of him whenever we hear it; the rarity of the key of B minor, which, not to regard the alleged peculiarities of particular keys as dissociable from particular expression, is, at least, a striking change from the tonality that has preceded; the singular instrumentation (comprising only, besides the string quartet, the drums, and trumpets, and horns, and, with equally clear and piercing, if not with such powerful tone, the oboes), which gives a hard, keen, angry quality to the general effect; and the fierce, rough, detached, declamatory phraseology of the voice part,—these are the technical essentials by which the composition is distinguished. A passage, at about the middle of the song, which modulates from the key of F sharp minor (the fifth of the original tonic) into E minor, and is repeated, in sequence, a note higher, is curious, as showing the prevalence of a particular train of thought with the author at the time he was engaged upon the work—a train of thought that stole upon him, obviously, without his consciousness, since we find the same course of modulation anticipated in what I have described as an Episode in the last Chorus, and we may notice its recurrence more than once in the progress of the Oratorio. This is not singular, that, at a particular period, a particular form of expression should be habitual to an author, since countless analogous instances of it are to be traced in works of pictorial and literary, no less than of musical art; but it is, perhaps, all the more on this account interesting; and I may further remark, that, though not essentially peculiar to him, Mendelssohn's habitual employment of this one series of progressions has so especially associated it with our idea of him, as to give to its occurrence in the music of any other writer, the effect of an imitation or plagiarism. In this passage, I must notice the thrilling poignancy of the effect of the oboes, which double the voice in two octaves upon the dissonance of the minor ninth, a point of instrumentation which draws the utmost effect from the prominent note of the melody, from the harmony, from the voice, and from the orchestra.

Such is our composer's embodiment of Saul the Avenger; it will subsequently be for us to identify the personality with the modified character of Paul the Apostle.

*No. 13.*—Another narrative Recitative continues the relation of Saul's persecution of the Christians, by the authority of the High Priest. The oppression of the Church is introduced, however, throughout the work, for the secondary purpose of illustrating the beauty, the purity, the loveliness of this institution, and its steadfastness, rather than of displaying especially the vindictive character of the Hebrew nation; and the composer has, accordingly, so arranged his text, as to brighten every scene of violence, committed under the pretence of God's authority, with some allusion to the affectionate, the fatherly character of the Deity; and so the truth, as taught by our Lord, is enforced by its immediate opposition with the false interpretation of man. Thus, in the present situation, the fierce denunciation of Saul is contrasted and relieved by the holy assurance, "the Lord is mindful of His own;" and the requisite propriety with which this is rendered in the music, fulfils the secondary purpose of contrast, of relief, and, thus, the higher object of representing the true nature of religion, to the utmost.

The simple loveliness of this beautiful little song defies eulogy, insinuating, without the medium of external praise, its own benign, reposeful, charitable character into the hearts of all who hear it. Here, again, the diatonic style of harmony is employed, but with a widely different effect, and, I think, a different purpose from that which distinguishes its appropriation to the last Air, in which the jarring harshness of its dissonances bespeaks the hard, inflexible spirit that is embodied; whereas, in this instance, the purity of the style is especially in keeping with the purity of the melody and the purity of the sentiment it expresses. Thus we see how entirely relative is everything in music; how the same means produce various, indeed opposite effects, being ever dependent upon the circumstances of their employment for the character they impart: and in what art is it otherwise?

The instrumentation is restricted to the string instruments only, frequently even without the double basses, which, by their rare employment, add to the softness, rather than to the weight of the tone, and contains some truly charming effects from the doubling of the principal melody in a lower octave by the viola. The extreme softness of this enhances greatly the impression of peacefulness the song so eminently conveys,—an impression that is scarcely qualified, and certainly not shaken by the phrases to the words, "Bow down before Him, ye mighty, for the Lord is near us," which shows our love for the Ruler of Heaven to be not unmingled with fear, but it is the fear which qualifies, indeed, and refines, by its exquisite sensitiveness, our love for a father. There is yet to notice the recurrence, upon these

words of which I have last been treating, of the one habitual series of progressions which I have noticed at the same position of the plan, namely, at what we may call the commencement of the Second Part in the last two pieces, and which is also to be traced in the corresponding situation in the earlier Air, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" It would be tedious to comment upon its every repetition, since all are immediately recognisable; and I shall, therefore, possibly, make little further allusion to it; its effect is none the less upon us for its frequent recurrence, but its property is none the more peculiar to the composer because he employs it so repeatedly.

This song is defined as an *Arioso*, by reason, I suppose, of its fragmentary character, especially with reference to its conclusion upon a dominant harmony, instead of with the necessary, or, at least, customary perfect cadence on the Key note, implying that it is less an Air, as this term is conventionally received, than in the style of an Air; and this fragmentary character is, I conjecture, given to it to indicate its parenthetical introduction in the narrative, implying that the action is uninterrupted, but that, during its progress during the relentless severity of their appointed persecutors against the "Children" of the Lord, they are still unforgotten by their Heavenly Father, who, though He appoint a violent agency to chasten them, loves them the while, chastening only for their salvation.

*No. 14.*—This short but eminently graphical scene is an interesting combination of the narrative with the dramatic form; its chief interest, however, lies in its complete success. It embodies the miracle of Saul's conversion, for which we have been prepared by the representation, first, of his fiery enthusiasm, which shows him to be one susceptible of sudden and violent impressions, obedient to the impulse of the moment, whether of good or evil, for such ever is the enthusiast whose ardour is unrestrained by the bridle of a matured judgment; and, then, of the holy influence which crushes the mighty, while it raises and protects the helpless and the erring. "The Lord is near us," is a truth which St. Paul promulgated to the world; let us ascribe a further import to the introduction of his own words in the last piece, namely, a presentiment of the great event already ripening for occurrence, a presentiment of which a character, such as Mendelssohn has drawn, would be especially susceptible, a presentiment which poets, the true psychologists of the world, have ever loved to paint, and which, being true to nature and to art, its embodiment here is a beautiful ideality. The greatest miracle in nature is nature itself; and the truly divine greatness of the Creator is more nobly attested in the wondrous regularity, the perfect order of His works, than

in the occasional, however miraculous, exception from it: it has been the religious, the philosophical, and the poetical province of the artist, therefore, to display the natural, though metaphysical causes that operate to effect the conversion of Saul from an oppressor to a teacher of the faith, and this province is discharged in the preparation I have attempted to describe for the present scene.

The narrative is here assigned to the tenor in the form of Recitative, in which, with the exception of the unexpected and very bright introduction of the chord of E major in the orchestra, where the singer relates that a light suddenly burst from heaven, the ordinary means of expression are avoided, the words being recited with the plainest simplicity, and thus the narrative is studiously distinguished from the dramatic portions of the scene.

The preternatural voice revealed from Heaven in the quivering brightness of the miraculous radiance, is represented by the chorus of female voices, accompanied by a most singular combination of wind instruments, in which, especially, the peculiar employment of the trumpets is to be remarked for its brilliant effect, and for the appropriateness of its introduction, not as a trumpet conventionally associated with war and its ceremonies, but as the brightest tone the orchestra affords, and, therefore, the indication of the lustrous purity of the heavenly choir. Strange, mysterious, unearthly, as is the effect thus produced, it has in it nothing that is terrible, for the composer has obviously felt and felicitously represented that, however amazing the effect of a manifestation from Heaven, since this is a manifestation of love and not of vengeance, the awe of him to whom it is addressed results from his own internal reproaches, and not from the appalling character of the revelation that is made to him. The rendering of this passage is strikingly picturesque: we feel as we should feel under the effect of a sudden blaze of light which grows in intensity even after its appearance, and then gradually fades away, leaving a soft, glowing impression on our dazzled sense which is unable to perceive truthfully while under its remaining influence. The tremolo of the string instruments, (embodying, we may suppose, the agitation of the beholder) which was interrupted by this very original passage, steals again upon us almost imperceptibly, as our consciousness of actual existences gradually returns when our organs recover from some unwonted excitement. The tenor Recitative continues the narrative, and the bass, personating the prostrate Saul, exclaims in an agony of apprehension, which is beautifully realized by the very sensitive dissonance with the accompaniment to which the words are set, "Lord, who art thou?" The tenor resumes the relation of how the heavenly voice again addressed

him; and the preternatural voice, in the same mysterious, thrilling, but beautiful tones, as before, again pours its flood of ethereal harmony upon his wondering ear. Again the feeling of darkness closes in upon us, as the sound of the wind instruments imperceptibly melts away and is replaced by the gradual recommencement of the tremulous vibration of the contrasted quality of tone. The tenor again continues his description of the effect of this divine annunciation, and, dramatically, Saul again, as in his own person, exclaims, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" A third time he is addressed by the heavenly choir, again in the same unearthly tones, and he is commanded to arise and go into the city, where he shall learn what duties are prepared for him. A point of peculiar significance in this last choral passage, which is partly lost in the English version from the want of a syllable and the consequent omission of a crotchet in the first bar, is the anticipation of the Subject of the following Chorus; this piece is thus distinctly connected with that which is to come, and the connexion places the text of the latter in the light of a commentary upon, or an explanation of, the words addressed to Saul. "Arise!" the Divine command is thus made to imply, not only that he is to leave the prostrate position into which in his amazement he has fallen, but that he is to stand forth before the world as an inspired light to teach the truths of Heaven.

No. 15.—This prodigiously grand Chorus—the greatest display of the composer's musicianship that has yet been made—the composition that reveals the brightness of his genius no less than the profundity of his artistic acquirements—is, as I have shown, an amplification of the purport of the command to Saul from Heaven. It has a peculiar interest from its being formed upon two texts, which are also employed by Handel in the *Messiah*—an interest which is weakened, if not wholly lost, in the English version, from the necessity of modifying these texts to adapt them to the exigencies of the musical accent; but which is so important to our due appreciation of the noble composition before us, that I think it most desirable, though the words in the *Messiah* cannot be sung to the Chorus in *St. Paul*, for us to associate them with it, whereby we shall form, not an estimation of the relative merits of the two masters which would add nothing to the glory of either, and be wholly from the purpose of judging of both, but, a correct idea of the wonderful conception of Mendelssohn, and of the extraordinary originality of his genius, which could withstand the temptation of such a model as his predecessor had left him, and, with the independence that is an essential characteristic of greatness, produce such a masterpiece as is here presented.

A remarkably long Symphony, which is a very

gradual and most majestic climax to the grand burst of voices and instruments that announces the principal Subject of the Chorus, introduces the passage of truly magnificent grandeur upon the well-known text in the Air, "O thou that tellest," of which its breadth and brightness renders a worthy interpretation, "Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!" It is the phrase set to these opening words which is anticipated in the last choral passage of the previous piece, the reader will immediately perceive with what admirable pertinence.

Thus much we may consider to be the first division of the movement, which is succeeded by a long, elaborate, and masterly fugue, throughout which the simple progressions of the voices are accompanied with a counterpoint of ceaselessly moving quavers by the string instruments; and, for this, we have a text that occurs in the Recitative preceding "The people that walked in darkness," namely, "For, behold! darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." The stern character of the Subject of this Fugue, the prevalence of minor keys throughout, and the complicated intricacies of its development, all serve to realize the import of the words, not in pantomimic imitation, but in lofty generalization of their gloomy significance. The fugue ended, this second division of the movement proceeds with the continuation of the same text, "But the Lord shall arise upon thee; and His Glory shall be seen upon thee." This is set with wonderful breadth and dignity; the first phrase is given by the sopranos only, enforced by the violins and violas in unison, and accompanied with the harmony of the wind instruments in iterated quavers—and the second phrase by the entire chorus in massive harmony, with the addition of the trombones to the score, which enter upon the last word of the foregoing, but with the omission of the string instruments, excepting when a passage for the violins is introduced upon some few prolonged chords: the effect of the whole is truly glorious, and the emotion it excites enthusiastic in the extreme.

The third division of the movement consists of a recurrence to the first, and a Coda formed upon the same text with which we are familiar in "O thou that tellest;" and of this, the highest praise that can be said is, that it is a worthy conclusion to the whole composition, and that it more than confirms the extraordinary impression the entire Chorus cannot fail to make on all who hear it.

From this noble movement, then, are we to understand the illustrious character and the boundless importance of St. Paul's mission—and the composer has grandly asserted the power of his art in bringing its uttermost resources successfully to bear upon this, ever interesting subject.

*No. 16.*—The Divine messenger is appointed; the hour is come when the sleeping world is to be aroused, the voice has called from Heaven. The situation and the preparation that has led to it make this the appropriate period for the introduction of the Lutheran Choral, which, from the pertinence of the words to the general design of the work, and, especially, from the incorporation of the melody in the Overture, we may consider as the motto of the Oratorio; and, accordingly, the grandly simple, primitive hymn, "Sleepers wake! a voice is calling," with the masterly investiture of Mendelssohn's harmony and instrumentation, constitutes the present piece, which most appropriately and as effectively follows, and carries out the purpose of, the last wonderful triumph of artistic elaboration. I must revert to what I have before said of our inability, in England, to appreciate the interspersion throughout the work of these Chorals; to form an idea of the designed effect of this present piece, for example, let us suppose the melody to be enwoven in our earliest infantile associations,—associations that have been kept alive by the ceaseless habitude of after years, and to have been always inseparable in our minds from these same words with which it is here given; then, in the frame of feeling to which we have been conditioned by the previous Chorus, we should, indeed, meet the composer with our sympathy—we should find our enthusiasm still more excited by the majestic summons that forms the interludes between the phrases, and with our full hearts, if not with our voices, we should accompany the Chorus in the natural expression of an emotion that must be universal.

As to the antiquity of the tune, I know not upon what authority it is associated with the name of Martin Luther, but there is great reason to suppose that, if employed by him in the service of the Reformed Church, it was an intentional appropriation or adaptation of a melody, at the time generally familiar, since the first strain is to be traced in one of the Gregorian Tones. With reference to this curious coincidence, it is a probable supposition that the tune, or a tune from which it has been derived, was known in the time of St. Paul, and may have been sung as a hymn by the Disciples at Damascus, to words more or less analogous with those at the time of the Apostle's sojourn there.

With regard to the beautiful decoration with which the genius of Mendelssohn has adorned but not disturbed the simplicity of the original, my attention has been drawn to an introduction of this Choral, with interludial passages for the trumpet, in an anonymous Oratorio, published at Hamburg some eighty years since, *The Disciples at Emmaus*, an extremely weak production, containing also a very great many other Chorals;

(Continued from page 6.)

and I adduce the circumstance—coincidence, if you will—as an example of the wonderfully different effects that may be drawn from the same means by a composer of genius and a writer of none.

G. A. MACFARREN.

(To be continued.)

## RUBINI.

THE subject of this notice was born sixty years ago: his fame is nevertheless of the present generation. Most of our readers recollect him as forming one part of the celebrated vocal quartett at Her Majesty's Theatre—Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache. He commenced his musical career as a boy, being a violinist in the church of Romano. His first essay on the stage, at the age of twelve years, was in a female part. The struggle which vocalists generally have to undergo fell to the lot of Rubini before he attained even a respectable position in his profession. When, however, he achieved the position which he so long occupied in London and Paris, his wealth began to accumulate, for, unlike many of his contemporaries, Rubini manifested not only a love for the "sinews of war"—money, but also a judicious care for it. The fortune he accumulated by his ability was increased by his prudence; and hence he is reported as having died richer than any vocalist on record. As an artist, he was great beyond comparison; the exquisite management of his voice, turning at length his natural defects into beauties, formed a striking contrast to the carelessness and ignorance of some of his contemporaries. His style was florid—opposite in a great measure to the prevailing mode; but to a genius for the branch of the art he professed, he added the application necessary for its perfect acquirement. The most brilliant part of his career must be fresh in public remembrance. To enumerate his most successful achievements is therefore unnecessary—in what are called the points of an opera, no singer ever created so great an effect, yet as a conscientious artist Rubini has had many rivals upon the Anglo-Italian stage; his voice in quality would never bear comparison with such an one as Mario's, or even Tamberlik's; it was in his method of using it—in his great power of expression, that Rubini excelled. In St. Petersburg, he was always successful, and so highly was he esteemed in the aristocratic circles there, that, in order to do him honor, the Czar gave him the colonelcy of a regiment.

Rubini's popularity extended to a late period of his life, yet he cannot be enrolled amongst the number of eminent musicians who have attained a great age.

VERNON.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*This Journal will be published fortnightly until August next, on the 1st and 15th of the month.*

*The late hour at which Advertisements reach us interferes much with their proper classification.*

*Colored Envelopes are sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.*

*We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.*

*J. G., Camden Town.—We must again repeat that we decline the invidious task of recommending particular works.*

*E. W., Ossett.—Your communications should be made immediately after the concert takes place which you wish noticed.*

*A. W., Teignmouth.—Arrangements for organ solos are not suited to the purpose for which music is published in our periodical. We thank our correspondent for the courteous tone of his personal allusions.*

*W. J. B. H.—The poetry of "Queen of the Valley," is by Southey, from the poem called "Madoc," with whom its meaning must rest.*

## Brief Chronicle of the last Fortnight

THE HULL HARMONIC SOCIETY gave their forty-eighth public performance on Friday, March 3rd, in the Music-hall, Jarratt-street, when Mozart's Mass, No. 12, was produced, and was followed by a selection from Handel's oratorio, *Samson*. The performance went off remarkably well.

NORTHAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY.—We are glad to hear that the patron of this Society, the Earl of Westmoreland, has contributed £10 towards the purchase of the German organ. We hope that his example will induce others who feel interested in the stability and welfare of this Society to contribute towards the same object.—*Northampton Mercury*.

MANCHESTER CONCERT HALL.—A grand performance of miscellaneous music took place here on the 8th March; vocalists, Miss Dolby, and Herren Reichardt and Formes, Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Night* formed an important feature of the evening, and concluded the concert.

MANCHESTER GENTLEMEN'S GLEE CLUB.—The annual concert of this society occurred on the 9th March, and duly sustained the reputation for excellence acquired by these performances. The principal singers on this occasion, were Mrs. Sunderland, Mrs. Thomas, Miss Heywood, Mrs. Brook, Messrs. Perring, Delavanti, and Winn. They were assisted by the regular choir, and Mr. W. Barlow presided at the piano-forte.

RUBINI, the admirable Italian tenor singer, died on the 2nd of March, at Romano in Bergamo, aged sixty.

ST. MARTIN'S HALL.—There was a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, on the 13th March, under the direction of Mr. Hullah, which gave marked satisfaction to an overflowing audience. Miss Dolby, Mrs. Endersohn, Mr. and Mrs. Weiss, and Mr. Augustus Braham, were the solo singers; and the choruses were admirably executed.

INVERNESS.—We learn from an Inverness paper, that Mr. C. H. Morine has recently delivered a lecture on Psalmody and Church Music to interested audiences.

LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.—Handel's *Messiah* is announced for the 4th April, rendered by 250 performers, the price of admission being one shilling.

PENRITH.—At the annual meeting of the Choral Society, it was reported that the members had increased from thirty-two to one hundred and five; that the library comprised 450 copies of the best compositions; and that there were ample funds to carry out further contemplated improvements. Haydn's *Creation* is to be produced in May.

MENDELSSOHN SCHOLARSHIP FUND.—In a recent number of the *Musical Times* we called attention to the Mendelssohn Scholarship Fund, in contradiction of a then prevailing report. The committee have just put forth a statement by which it appears that the gross receipts from the Lind Concert were £1439. 8s. which, after payment of expenses left a balance of £953. 13s. 7d.—to this sum the dividends have been added, and the capital now amounts to £1250. The following extract is from the